

U.S. ARMY CONTRACTING AGENCY (ACA) NEWSLETTER

“OUR TEAM IS GROWING”

Volume 1, Issue 9

January 2003



GREETINGS FROM THE ACTING DIRECTOR

The Headquarters staff and I wish you all a happy and healthy New Year and hope that all your December holiday activities were enjoyable.

This past year we were very busy and faced many challenges in standing up the new ACA. Now after one full quarter as an operating Agency we can be proud of all that we accomplished, and at the same time, look forward to a full plate for calendar year 2003. We successfully transitioned the personnel without pay problems, we activated the Interactive Customer Evaluation Tool, we completed the Liaison Officer Utilization Plan, we are recruiting for permanent liaison staff, and we have a new Contingency Contracting Directorate in ACA headquarters that has come a long way in pulling all aspects of this mission together for consistency and uniform quality in providing this service to the Army. This year is a critical one for the agency to ensure its financial status keeps pace with its operational status and prepare for the overseas commands to join us.

It has been very heartwarming to me to see the hard work and enthusiasm displayed by ACA staff worldwide in creating new organizations, policies and using ingenuity to do whatever it takes to get the job done. In the coming year, we will see more coordination required to fully define our mission capabilities to our customers, resolve overlapping mission issues with other agencies, and we will finalize needed ACA administrative guidance. We face the challenge of the “Third Wave” of contracting out, and the ever-pressing need to hire and nurture a quality workforce while staff in greater numbers becomes eligible for and begins retirement.

Thanks for all you have done and continue to do, and keep up the great work towards developing and fine-tuning the ACA and service to its customers in the New Year!

Sandy Sieber



THE JOY OF GIVING

In an effort to bring a little bit of joy to others less fortunate, ITEC4-NCR personnel played Santa Claus to more than their own families. They adopted a family of six in Dumfries, Virginia and planned a wonderful Christmas for them. Some of the items given included educational games for the youngest, interactive toys, CD players for the middle children, clothing for the teenager, new towels and dishware for the parents, gift certificates for groceries, and a camera and photo album to capture the spirit of giving. The best gift of all was simply just being able to share the true meaning of Christmas! The family was found through the Prince William County Action in the Community Through Service (ACTS) Program. The donations and support given by ITEC4-NCR employees was overwhelming and exceeded all expectations.

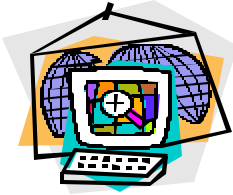
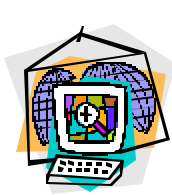


U.S. ARMY CONTRACTING AGENCY (ACA) LIAISON OFFICER (LNO) UTILIZATION PLAN

On December 12, 2002, Mrs. Sieber, Acting Director of the U.S. Army Contracting Agency (ACA), signed the ACA LNO Utilization Plan. A copy is available at the ACA Home Page under "Customer Liaisons." This plan augments the ACA Implementation Plan and provides the framework to establish and maintain an effective customer liaison network between and amongst Headquarters ACA Army Major Commands, the regional structure of the Installation Management Agency, and the Network Enterprise Technology Command.

This plan formulates and establishes the LNO component of the ACA. The end state of this plan is to ensure compliance with the spirit and intent of the ACA Concept and Implementation Plans, and to provide timely and effective contract support to customer organizations by enhancing rapport and establishing a feedback channel with key customers.





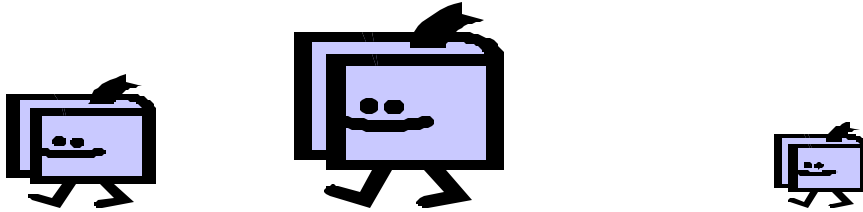
On June 24, 2002, the U.S. Army initiated its upgrade of the Standard Procurement System (SPS) Procurement Desktop-Defense (PD2) contract generation software, from the current version (v4.1e) to version 4.2 Increment 1. Now, after seven months of hard work and tight coordination the first phase of the SPS Joint Program Management Office's (JPMO) PD2 upgrade plan will be complete at the end on January 2003.

To date, The Army has upgraded 176 PD2 databases (approximately 95%) at 315 contracting installations, for more than 6,100 users. The Army faced a mountain of logistical and operational challenges, including upgrading at the end of the fiscal year; expectations for success have been significantly exceeded. The Army successfully deployed to all of its OCONUS sites at the U.S. Army Contracting Commands in Europe and Korea, the Central Command's forward locations in Kuwait, Qatar and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the Southern Command's locations in Honduras and Puerto Rico.

Upon completion of the upgrade in January, the ACA will begin scheduling and deployment of approximately 30 PD2 training classes, targeted to all newly hired 1102's who have not yet received formal training on the PD2 software. The classes will include "Contracts," "Report Writing," "System Administration," and "Database Maintenance." These classes will be conducted at strategically selected locations--tentatively: Ft. Lee, VA; Warren, MI; Huntsville, AL; Wurzburg, Germany, and a location on the west coast yet to be determined. As the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps come on-line with the v4.2 Increment 2 iteration, the Army will seek cooperative agreement from our sister services, as they phase in their use of the next iteration of PD2 (v4.2 Increment 2), to leverage their training facilities located in Texas, California, Florida, Ohio, Korea and Japan. The initial classes, and their required training databases, will be funded by the ACA and open to all Army PD2 users on a first come, first served basis. Expectations remain high as we anticipate the pending release of PD2 v4.2 Increment 2.

In addition to garrison deployment of SPS 4.2 version 1, the Army provided SPS deployment support for operations "Enduring Freedom" and "Victory Strike," by providing SPS' Battle-Ready Contingency Contracting System (BRCCS) PD2 configuration. The U.S. Army Southern Command's (USARSO) Mission Support Directorate is using BRCCS in an operational capacity. Lastly, the Army provided BRCCS support to the Joint Forces Taskforce, 9th Theater Support Command's (Army Reserve) training mission in Ft. Shafter, Hawaii and Misawa, Japan.

chavis, george [gchavis@hq.dema.mil]



NRCC Successfully Completes 53 A-76 Studies Throughout TRADOC

By Abra Smith, NRCC

The Northern Region Contracting Center (NRCC), formerly TRADOC Acquisition Center (TAC), and the ACA Northern Region Headquarters, formerly TRADOC PARC, recently completed 53 A-76 studies across TRADOC. TRADOC completed the study of more than 8,400 positions or 26 percent of the Army's total. To date, 45 of the 53 completed studies (those with final results recorded) are projected to save more than \$163M annually, the Army's largest! The 53 completed studies included 18 contract decisions and 35 in-house decisions.

The NRCC embraced a centralized team approach to completing the studies. Having the same team members perform the various required tasks for multiple studies, functions, and locations, the Centralized Management approach ensured consistent and effective execution. To encourage competition and obtain industry input early in the acquisition process, draft solicitations were published on the Center's web page resulting in a better document requiring fewer clarifications. Another innovative approach was hosting a 2-day industry forum for all businesses interested in submitting proposals for A-76 requirements at TRADOC installations. Over 300 interested private- and public sector personnel attended this first-of-its-kind event.

The TRADOC effort enhanced the opportunities for success by employing lessons learned from the early studies and streamlining procedures. The TRADOC PARC office was an integral participant throughout the process, providing leadership, review, and coordination for the studies. Their team of analysts worked diligently to provide timely and consistent reviews and guidance.

The Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) played a key role as well. DCAA performed audits of the cost proposals of both prime contractors and subcontractors for all of the studies. Additionally, DCAA provided two onsite personnel to assist with the cost analysis for each proposal. Their expertise in performing detailed cost realism analyses ensured the successful completion of an otherwise daunting task.

The initiatives to streamline the process, incorporate performance based service acquisition techniques in the cost comparison process, and achieve a level of standardization based on best practices were all realized. Because of the high level of professionalism exuded by all team members, the NRCC successfully completed all 53 studies under its cognizance in advance of the mandated timeframe.

“Breaking New Ground”
by Diane Broadway, NRHQ

The Directors of the ACA Northern Region (NR) gathered in Hampton, Virginia during December, to share their expertise with members of the NR Headquarters team. Cautioned that this workshop would be a “roll-up-your-sleeves-and-work-through-issues” event, participants arrived prepared to get down to business. After a welcoming icebreaker, designed to meet and greet as well as renew acquaintances, an aggressive agenda awaited the attendees. Colonel Boshears chose to tackle Resource Management as the first item of business, with his resident experts, Mr. Richard Dixon, Mr. Nick Fuller, and Ms. Jean Melson setting the tone for the remainder of the workshop. Since the weighty agenda items were of interest to all attendees, there were lively and passionate discussions, with some tremendous views expressed. Colonel Boshears is a firm believer that the real contracting talent lay in the field, in the trenches, with those who do the job daily, and his intent was to foster good discussion, inviting innovation from the region. Other topics included Ms. Beverly Stevens, ACA NR Deputy Director, leading the discussion on Personnel and Hiring Plans and Business Rules for Contract Migration, and other NR staff experts discussing Training and Career Development, Acquisition Policy, Contracting Warrant Procedures, Hot IMPAC Purchase Card Issues, and SPS. Mr. Don Fitzgerald, ACA NRHQ, discussed Contract Management Reviews and Program Management Reviews, and the tentative schedule in the works. Mr. James Edwards, Fort Lewis, and Mr. Bruce Ferguson, Fort Drum, led a discussion on the merits of contracting with the JWOD Work Centers, sharing some true success stories and their positive experiences in JWOD contracting.

Mr. Tom Laccone, OSD-ODA&M, enlightened everyone on the intricacies of the Interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE), illustrating how the system worked and demonstrating how this metric information could be extracted, and feedback acted upon, by leadership.

A full morning was devoted to Small Business and the ACA Small Business Plan, with Colonel Gus Mancuso, Executive Officer to Ms. Tracey Pinson, Army Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (SADBU), joining Mr. Thomas Kobezak, ACA, NR, Associate Director SADBU. Together they led the discussion, presenting the Army’s perspective and the importance placed on ensuring small businesses receive ample opportunity to compete for ACA contract dollars.

The Workshop ended with a Holiday Luncheon, during which several rising vocal stars debuted their talents, along with some innovative new lyrics being sung to some familiar carols. The overall success of this Workshop was due primarily to the proactive stance of NRHQ team members combined with the active participation of attendees. It proved to be a great opportunity to exchange innovative information, cultivate ideas, share success stories, and forge new relationships to better meet the needs of our customers.



NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



The ARCENT- Southwest Asia Contracting Command, formerly known as the Third U.S. Army Principal Assistant for Contracting, began deploying its headquarters to Camp Doha, Kuwait in early October. Maintaining a presence in the region in the form of three Directorates of Contracting, the Command has a full-time staff located in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. Commanded by Col. Mark Neumann, the unit bears numerous responsibilities. First, acting as the U.S. Central Command's executive agent for contracting in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Jordan, the command supports all branches of the military as well as Operation Enduring Freedom and any pending military action in the region. Current support includes maintaining existing contracts in the region while utilizing the ability to develop new contracts as contingencies arise. Designed to support the thousands of troops deployed to the area, these contracts span the entire range of contracting procedures from simplified acquisitions to multi-million dollar cost contracts. Also serving as a special staff to the Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) Commanding General, Col. Neumann advises the CFLCC Commander on contract related matters and the Logistic Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP) in the region. In addition, this command has the responsibility to establish a Coalition Joint Contracting Center (C/JCC), made up of representatives from each branch of service to coordinate contracting support within the Area of Responsibility (AOR). Utilizing all of its many assets, along with host nation support, the Southwest Asia Contracting Command is truly a combat force multiplier.

The command is currently engaged in setting the conditions for troop support with various contractual vehicles. Our focus remains upcoming operations and close out. The Officers, NCOs, Soldiers and Civilians here in the command wish all in OCONUS & CONUS Happy Holidays and a productive new year. We would like to

thank the ACA, all the 51C's and 1102's here from other locations supporting this operation. We very much need some 1102's to deploy to support Regional DOC's around the Area of Operations. If you want some excitement and a challenge directly supporting troops on the ground contact COL Scott Risser of the ACA.

Good luck and God bless
Mark R Neumann



“HAIL AND FAREWELLS”

Ms. LeAntha Sumpter has joined the Army Contracting Agency as Program Manager in the Purchase Card Joint Program Office. Ms. Sumpter is currently wearing a dual hat in that she is also the current Deputy Director, Acquisition Initiatives (Process and Policies) in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology & Logistics) (AT&L) responsible for managing acquisition initiatives for AT&L. Her areas of responsibility include commercial, performance-based and R&D acquisition, past performance, government property, performance based payments, single process initiative and interoperability, and outreach and communication.

Hello and welcome to Kathy Love who joins the Contract Policy & Support Directorate. Kathy was on the staff of the HQs U.S. Army Materiel Command (AMC) for the past 3 years as a Procurement Analyst primarily supporting the AMC PARC mission in terms of oversight and compliance. Kathy has over 27 years contracting experience and has worked in a number of different Army MACOM contracting organizations.

ALSO...news from RM.....

Mr. Michael Robinson has joined the effort at the Army Contracting Agency and is currently assigned to the Resource Management Directorate where he will be working budget issues for Mr. Bruce Trimble. Welcome!

RETIREMENTS



Col Bryon Young was recognized on 9 January 2003, with a Retirement Ceremony and luncheon in his honor. Col Young was officially decorated with the Legion of Merit. The Legion of Merit is awarded to any member of the Armed Forces of the United States or a friendly foreign nation who has distinguished himself or herself by exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements. Mrs. Sandra Sieber, Acting Director, Army Contracting Agency presented Col Young the award.

AWARDS

Congratulations, COL Merkwan, the 2002 Acquisition Commander of the Year.



US Army Contracting Command Europe Commander, COL Merkwan, was presented the Acquisition Commander of the Year award jointly by the ACA Acting Director and the USAREUR DCG, LTG Dodson in Heidelberg on 11 December 2002. COL Merkwan then presented the corresponding staff plaque to his senior staff.



Why We Honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

Early in our country's history, almost all black people came here as slaves. Because people in the South felt they needed cheap labor in building the land and because black people in Africa knew how to farm land like that in the South, they were taken from their homes and forced to come to America. Upon arriving in this country, they were sold to whites as slaves without rights or freedoms.

In 1776, the American Colonies declared their freedom from Great Britain. In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson wrote that "all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." That is, Jefferson declared that all citizens have the rights to be free from oppression and have equal opportunities in pursuing their goals. These ideals have been called the American Dream.

To best achieve these ideals, the people of the United States developed their government along democratic principles in which the people choose who will lead them and decide which laws should guide them. The Constitution is a document that tells how leaders are to be chosen and how laws are to be made. The laws can be changed, usually when a majority votes to do so.

However, in the new government, slaves were not given the same rights as white people. They were not given the opportunity to choose their leaders, start businesses, own homes or go to school. Slaves were not allowed to lead their lives in the ways they wanted. Yet, there were many people, mostly people in the North, who wanted the slaves to be free, but there was not a majority of the people in the country who felt that way. Some states in the North had outlawed slavery, but most blacks in the South remained slaves. Free blacks in the North had more rights than slaves, but they still did not have as many rights as white people.

Freeing the slaves was a large issue in the Civil War. After that war, the slaves were finally given their freedom through amendments to the Constitution. The Thirteenth Amendment outlawed slavery in the United States, the Fourteenth Amendment gave blacks citizenship and the Fifteenth Amendment gave them the right to vote. Blacks became free citizens of the United States, but many whites were not happy with this change. They felt that blacks should not be treated as citizens equal to whites. They passed laws to keep whites and blacks apart. In 1896, the Supreme Court decided that the "separate but equal" facilities legalized in the South did not violate the 14th Amendment. Thus, blacks could not work with whites, live in the same neighborhoods

or send their children to the same schools as whites. Even so, black people throughout the nation contributed to the betterment of the country. Efforts to give black people their rights never stopped, but the changes were not enough. After World War II, many more people felt that new laws were needed. In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled that blacks and whites could go to the same schools, saying that "separate but equal" schools were inherently unequal. However, many people still did not want to change. It took a strong leader, a person who believed in peace and justice, to win more freedom for black Americans. Martin Luther King, Jr. was that man.

Between 1955 and 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. helped change America. He brought to the world's attention how unfairly blacks were treated. He had the help of millions of Americans, but his strong leadership and unprecedented power of speech gave people the faith and courage to keep working peacefully even when others did not. This led to new laws that ended the practice of keeping people of different backgrounds apart, making life fairer for everyone.

America will always remember the work of Martin Luther King, Jr. Each year, on the third Monday in January, we celebrate his birthday. This is the first national holiday to honor an individual black American. The legacy of Dr. King lives in each of us and we are responsible to promote, teach and live the American Dream.

The Army's VECO Fort Hood Story

During September through November 2002, the Army Contracting Agency (ACA) working with American Management Systems (AMS) conducted a pilot test of the Virtual Electronic Contracting Office (VECO) application at Fort Hood. The purpose of the test was to evaluate the ability of VECO to electronically pass DD-250 receiving reports from customers at Fort Hood to the Lawton Defense Finance Accounting Office (DFAS). In addition, the pilot test evaluated the transmission of award and modification transactions from the Procurement Desktop Server at Fort Hood, through the Defense Electronic Business Exchange, to DFAS using a XML "adaptor" technology. The adaptor tested is very similar to what will be fielded with SPS version 4.2.2. The results of this test were surprising and represent a major near-term step forward in finding a solution to reducing Army Prompt Payment Act (PPA) interest penalties as well as testing the future 4.2.2 adapter.

PRWeb/receiving is a VECO "web-based" application that streamlines the preparation and submittal of the DD Form 250 receiving report by pre-populating the form using data pulled directly from the PD2 database. After entering the quantity received, the user then electronically sends the DD-250 data to DFAS through the DEBX. The results of our testing exceeded all parties involved expectations (DFAS, Contractor, and Army). The contract awards/modifications process of going through the DEBX interface into CAPS was comparable to the current interface process known as SPS-I. However, the transmission of the acceptance/receipt documents (DD 250) showed a remarkable 91.6% success rate of acceptance into CAPS for payment

The Army has negotiated a Memorandum of Agreement with DFAS to conduct a 6-month extended pilot test in a production operational environment starting in January 2003. The success of the program will be measured in terms of user satisfaction and the amount of reduced interest penalties as a result of using an electronic DD-250 to accelerate the timely transmission of complete and accurate receiving reports to DFAS.

Robert A. Cooper



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& Electronic Commerce
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Budget

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Personnel
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SADBUO
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A Word from the Editor

We would like to involve our readers in playing a more active role in guiding the publication. As always, we continue to invite our readers to provide their ideas, views, and opinions. If you have comments and/or suggestions for the newsletter on how we can continue to improve the publication, please don't hesitate to let me know. Email your comments to Shirlee.Knickerbocker@SAALT.army.mil or call me at DSN 761-9158. DISTRIBUTION D: Distribution authorized to DoD and US DoD Contractors only. Other requests for this document shall be referred to: U.S. Army Contracting Agency, ATTN: SFCA (Nicki Knickerbocker), 5109 Leesburg Pike, Skyline 6, Suite 302, Falls Church, VA 22041-3201, or request by Email to shirlee.knickerbocker@saalt.army.mil.
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